

## THE HARP CAME BACK

Incident in the Career of an Old Time Opera Manager.

### A SURPRISE FOR MARETEK.

It Came at a Time When Max Was Broke and the Sheriff Had Levied Upon All His Stage Properties—Mme. Maretek's Thanks to the Carpenter.

In the old days in New York city, before there was a Metropolitan or a Manhattan Opera House and when the center of the theatrical world was around Fourteenth street, Max Maretek and Strakosch were prominent at the old Academy of Music. There was a keen rivalry between them. Strakosch had Nilsson, and Maretek was exploiting Di Murska.

By some error of dates both were booked for New York at the same time. Strakosch was at the Academy and Maretek, having closed a poor season elsewhere, had halted in New York before going to Philadelphia and secured a week at the Lyceum theater on Fourteenth street. There were strong bills at both places. Each manager had his friends, and the bill posters had a busy time of it. A round of bills for one company was no sooner posted than the rival billposter covered up the poster with the rival company's sheets.

At last, for the matinee on Saturday, bills at both houses were suddenly changed, every vacant fence place plastered over quickly, and with a pelting storm in the morning the managers began to put out "paper" to fill the houses. Alfred Joel was the business man for Maretek and an adept at "papering" when necessary. With a house packed from parquet to gallery Joel had counted the boxes, found only \$100 in the house and announced it to Max when the curtain fell between the acts.

This was serious to Max. The ever ready money lender who had "put up for him" had a lien on the box office, a sheriff's officer was in waiting on the stage, and it was a question of reprieve before the properties and costumes could be liberated to follow the company to Philadelphia early next morning.

"Well, Alfred," quietly said Max, "I guess I'm used to trouble. But there is a good, big house anyway." Then, turning to his wife, who was the harpist of the orchestra, he clasped both her hands, kissed her and remarked: "Let your fingers do their best. I want to hear you play. It does my heart good, you know, even when there's trouble."

There was bustling after the performance. Legal talent was at a premium, creditors were obdurate, everything that was supposed to be Maretek's was temporarily in "lock," and Mme. Maretek in tears, with longing looks at the harp she valued.

The scene of negotiations was transferred to the greenroom just as the officers making the levy were searching for more, and when their backs were turned the old stage carpenter hurried Mme. Maretek away, then called her

back again five minutes after and pointed to the orchestra.

The harp had disappeared. Clearing out everything on Sunday morning, while the boxes of properties were being taken away, Max and his wife stood in the center of the darkened stage. Both were crying. The instrument they valued most had been taken from them. Other things had been liberated, but no harp, and with a scene of grief that no others than themselves could have appreciated they were silent.

Then Old Man Guernsey stood between them and waved his hand above them into space. There were a creaking of pulley wheels, an injunction from the carpenter to "look out for your heads," and, lowered from above, came Mme. Maretek's harp, landing on the stage between them.

"Now you've got it again, get it away quick!" said Guernsey. "Stop crying and be thankful. That's all."

He moved off without waiting for thanks, and a pathetic scene with Max and his wife closed the incident. To them the harp was as a part of themselves. To lose it was more than a misfortune, and in a broken voice the lady called the carpenter back to her.

"Please let the harp thank you," said she, "and listen. It will speak with my hands on this Sunday morning."

She placed herself beside it, seated on a box, and, with a smile that chased away tears, gave for a moment or two, as only she could give it, the air of the doxology, "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow."—New York Times.

#### Trouble Ahead.

A north country coroner is said to be waiting the suicide of a local poet who wrote about clasping "the two tremulous hands" of his ladylove, but which the printer made to read "the two tremendous hands."—London Mail.

#### A Queer Question.

Small Harold (at the zoo)—What is that funny looking bird, papa? Papa—That is a bald eagle, Harold. Small Harold—How long does an eagle have to be married before he gets bald, papa?—Chicago News.

#### Usually Has To.

"Say, paw, what is a genius?" "A genius is a man who can do his own washing, sewing and cooking, my boy."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Weak men never yield at the proper time.—Latin.

#### A Bunch of Kicks.

"The world wipes its feet on me," said the doorman. "And every hand is against me," said the push button.—Kansas City Star. "I am continually being sat on," complained the soft cushion. "And I get beaten hard for the lightest thing," the egg groaned.—Boston Transcript.

#### A Gastronomic Feast.

"Ah, I've seen some rough times, sir!" said an old salt. "Once we were wrecked and we'd eaten all our provisions. Then we ate our belts, and then the ship turned turtle, and we ate her too!"

# GIFTS FOR MEN

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#### Number of Nails to a Horseshoe.

Centuries ago there lived a farrier, Walter le Brun by name, whose dexterity at the anvil on the occasion of a great tilting meeting on the banks of the Thames was noticed by the then reigning monarch, Edward III., who rewarded the blacksmith by granting him sufficient land adjoining the tilting green for the erection thereon of a forge. As quit rent he had to present annually to the king six horseshoes and sixty-one horseshoe nails. To the modern mind the number of nails would appear to be superfluous, but when it is remembered that the horseshoes of that period required ten nails apiece it will be seen that the calculations of Edward III. merely allowed one over in case of accident. Furthermore, the shoes were all to be for the horse's fore feet, from which fact some historians draw the inference that the animals ridden in the knights' tournaments were encouraged to injure each other with their front hoofs.—London News.

#### "Correct to a T."

Our earliest quotation for this or for the kindred phrases "to suit one to a T," "to fit to a T," "to know one to a T," is of 1683. Can any one help us to an earlier example? No one of our many instances throws any light upon its origin. A current obvious conjecture would explain "a T" as meaning "a T square," but to this there are various objections. We have no evidence as yet that the name "T square" goes back to the seventeenth century and no example of its being called simply "a T," and in few if any of our instances would the substitution of "a T square" for "a T" make any tolerable sense. The notion seems rather to be that of minute exactness, as it were "to the minutest point." But the evidence is mainly negative. If examples can be found of "T square" before 1700 or of its reduction simply to "T" or of earlier examples of "to a T" they may help to settle the actual origin.—London Notes and Queries.

#### When the President Lost His Hat.

The Crystal Palace exhibition opened at New York July 15, 1883, was the first affair of this kind in the country for which foreign exhibits were solicited. The "big show" began with a procession, in which President Franklin Pierce, mounted, was a conspicuous feature. The hero of the day rode a mettlesome steed, and while proceeding up Wall street the presidential headgear, a new silk hat of the prevalent style, was incontinently tumbled to the pavement. Another horse recklessly stepped upon the unfortunate tile, crushing it out of the semblance to itself, besmearing it with mud—real Wall street mud. What was left of the misshapen and bedaubed hat was worn by the president, to the great amusement of the spectators, until a substitute could be secured.

#### A Witty Retort.

One day while dining with the secretary of the admiralty William IV., the heir presumptive to the British crown, said: "When I am king, sir, you shall not be the secretary of the admiralty, I promise you. What do you say to that, eh?" "All I can respond in such case," returned the witty official, "is, 'God save the king!'"—St. Louis Republic.

#### Fido's Tail a Mystery.

Little Willie was tugging at Fido's tail. "What are you trying to do with the dog?" asked the child's father. "I think his tail is coming off." "Oh, no, Willie. That's impossible. What makes you think so?" "Cause Fido's tail is so loose that it wiggles."—New York Press.

#### Bright Thought.

"Oh, dear," sighed small Elmer. "I wish I had another pocket!" "You have several now," rejoined his mother. "Why do you want another?" "I've looked through all of them for my knife," explained Elmer, "but couldn't find it. If I had another pocket it might be in that."—Chicago News.

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